

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 262

By Sontany

A RESOLUTION to welcome the 15th annual ATHENA Celebration to the Parthenon in Nashville, Tennessee on March 31, 2005 and to honor the ATHENA Foundation for its invaluable work in creating leadership opportunities for women within this State.

WHEREAS, this General Assembly welcomes the opportunity to support gender equity in all facets of society and is supportive of the efforts of those organizations that work to create leadership opportunities for women, thus permitting society to benefit from the particular characteristics and qualities that women bring to leadership in business, government, the arts and sciences, or any other realm of human endeavor; and

WHEREAS, the ATHENA Foundation is one such dynamic organization which, since 1982, has worked with hundreds of communities to encourage and acknowledge women in leadership positions; and

WHEREAS, the ATHENA Leadership Model calls for a celebration of the vitality, robustness, and possibilities of life, which allow a sense of pleasure in work and accomplishments; ATHENA leaders find expression and a renewal of their energies in the arts and in nature; and

WHEREAS, the annual ATHENA Celebration is the premier event recognizing and encouraging the achievements of women in business and professions and is held in over 350 cities around the world; only in Nashville is the event coordinated as a collaborative effort among the city's most distinguished women's organizations, thirty-seven of which will participate this year in celebrating the leadership of twenty-five nominees representing the rich diversity in Nashville and demonstrating an intense commitment to improving the community in which we all live, work, and play; and

WHEREAS, on March 31, 2005, the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual ATHENA Celebration will be held at the Parthenon in Nashville, an event that will be commemorated with much anticipation during the National Women's History Month; and

WHEREAS, the ATHENA program has been held at the Parthenon every year since its inception in Nashville, and a bronze sculpture designed by Linda Ackley has been presented to the ATHENA recipients each year; and

WHEREAS, one of the pioneer sponsors of this noteworthy event was the National Association of Women Business Owners, which was the first organization sponsor and served as chair of the Nashville ATHENA Award Program for the first five years; CABLE assumed the responsibility for organizing and chairing the program in 1996 and has commendably continued to assist in enlarging the impact of the ATHENA Awards in the Nashville community; and

WHEREAS, a few of the numerous community sponsors who have helped make this event possible include South Central Bell/BellSouth Services, Hippodrome Olds, Shoney's Inc., various banks, universities, and numerous women-owned businesses; Nashville State Technical Institute helped the ATHENA Celebration in a nonconventional way by producing the first film about the ATHENA nominees, which film remains a centerpiece of the awards program today; and

WHEREAS, the ATHENA Award Program provides scholarships for graduating high school seniors and nontraditional students returning to further their education. The Nashville ATHENA Scholarship Program has awarded thousands of dollars in scholarships since 1993, and has provided great opportunities for schools and the community to interact with, and learn from, women of achievement; and

WHEREAS, the remarkable first recipients of the ATHENA scholarships wrote an essay on "Ways That Women Can Make a Difference and Empower Other Women." In 1993, scholarships were \$500 for each worthy recipient, but now the scholarship awards have reached an impressive total of \$15,000 for 2005; and

WHEREAS, Senator Thelma Harper presented the first ATHENA Award to the Honorable Martha Craig "Cissy" Daughtrey, who was the first female member of Tennessee's

Supreme Court, as well as Tennessee's Court of Appeals, and presently serves with distinction on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit; and

WHEREAS, other notable women of achievement who are recipients of the ATHENA Award include such community leaders as Margaret L. Behm, the late Mary Anne Jackson, Inez Crutchfield, Linda B. Rudolph, Ph.D., Sarah Hamilton Sell, M.D., Sheriff Gayle Ray, Betty Chiles Nixon, Carol L. McCoy, Deborah C. German, M.D., Ronnie Steinberg, Ph.D., Chief Deborah Faulkner, Ed.D., Patricia Pierce, and Mary Frances Lyle; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly wishes to offer its support and praise to an organization whose goals include the complete liberation of the talents of over half of our nation's and the world's population and empowering the potential of women everywhere; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we commend the ATHENA Foundation for the laudable pursuit of its goal of creating leadership opportunities for women, thank them for their unfailing dedication to that noble cause, and offer our heartiest welcome to the 15th Annual ATHENA Celebration to be held in Nashville on March 31, 2005.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.